

# Reading at St Peter's



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Dear Parents and Children,

Learning to read is one of the most important skills that you will learn at our school, so we put as much energy as we possibly can into making sure that every single child learns to read as quickly as possible.

Reading underpins children's access to the curriculum and impacts on their achievement. Reading increases children's vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Children who read widely and frequently also have more secure general knowledge. There is considerable research to show that children who enjoy reading and choose to read benefit not only academically, but socially and emotionally too.

At St Peter's, we want children to love reading – and to want to read for themselves. This is why we work hard to make sure children develop a love of books as well as simply learning to read.



**This information leaflet sets out the steps in the journey that children will take in reading from Reception to Year 6.**

We hope that you find it useful. If you have any questions, please see Mrs Bolden (Reading Lead) or speak to your child's class teacher.

## The Reading Journey:

To be able to read, children need to be taught an efficient strategy to read (decode) words. That strategy is phonics. As soon as children begin St Peter's in our Reception classes, they start to learn to read. Once children have mastered how to use phonics to read, they are able to use more complex strategies to support their reading. At St Peter's, children's individual reading journey is structured to support them as they develop these skills. It has three separate levels, **Phonic Texts**, **Rainbow Readers** and the **St. Peter's Reading Challenge**, all of which you can read more about inside.

However, the decoding of words is only one part of reading. Children also need to be taught the comprehension skills to enable them to make sense of what they read. Across the school we use group and whole-class reading sessions, led by staff to help children develop these skills. We call these sessions: **Group Reading or Whole-Class Guided Reading**.

Finally, we know that reading opens the door to new experiences and knowledge and has the power to transport children to new worlds. Our focus on **Quality Sharing Texts** across all stages of the reading journey and in the curriculum ensures that we broaden children's reading experience. Our Quality Sharing Texts take many forms – poetry, picture books (with or without words), information texts, chapter books, modern stories or famous classics but they all lend themselves to being talked about, thought through and returned to time and again.



## Step 1 - Phonic Texts

As soon as children begin St Peter's in our Reception classes, they start to learn to read. When children are learning to read, it is really important that they are able to practise reading with fully decodable books that are matched to their phonic knowledge. This will enable them to use the letters and phonic sounds that they already know and, with practice, read easily and fluently.

This stage of reading is supported by our range of **Phonic Texts**. As a school we follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds phonics program and our **Phonic Texts** are organised so that the sounds in the book match the order of the sounds that are being taught in school. We use a mixture of Phonics Bug & Big Cat readers for our **Phonic Texts** stage and the scheme has both fiction books and non-fiction books. Our staff will teach children sounds and how to use them to decode and read words during their phonics lessons. Children will also practice reading individually or in a small group with a member of staff during the week.

### Reading practice at home:

We hugely value the contribution that parents make when it comes to reading and know the impact you can have. All children on the Phonic Texts stage will bring home their reading practice book each week. This book will be:

- ☐ a book that they have already read at school with a member of staff,
- ☐ at the correct phonic stage for your child,
- ☐ contain phonemes that your child already knows so they can practice blending to read words,
- ☐ contain only words which the child can sound out and blend (phonetically decodable).

This may mean that the book your child brings home seems too easy, but it is important to know that that your role in helping your child to practise reading at home is to build confidence and fluency. You need to listen with interest and, most importantly, to encourage and praise, enthusiastically acknowledging the child's achievement (even if, at the early stages, this is only small). This may feel different, especially if you have had older children in our school and is because of the new, fully integrated approach that we are taking.

If your child gets stuck on a word, read it to them. Do not ask them to look at the pictures for clues or use the words around it to guess what it might be. After the child has read the book, it would be helpful to talk about the book. This should be a celebration of their success as a reader.

Children will have their reading practice book at home for a full week. It is good practice to read it on at least 3 different occasions to practise 3 different reading skills.

1. The first time they read it they can focus on blending to read the words (decoding).
2. The second time they read it they can focus on reading with expression and improved fluency (prosody).
3. The third reading can have a comprehension focus such as sequencing events, explaining what words mean or making inferences based on the clues in the text.

Helpful notes for parents, on the inside front cover of each book, highlight the phonemes and words featured in the book and give you ideas for before and during reading, and the inside back covers include ideas for delving deeper after reading to check understanding.

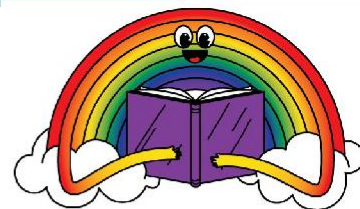
If children are to become lifelong readers, it is essential that they are also encouraged to read for pleasure. The desire of wanting to read will help with the skill of reading. To help foster a love of reading, your child will also bring home a **quality text**, or sharing book home each week, alongside their Phonics Text to share and enjoy with you. We also often take children to visit the library in school, and they may also then choose a book to take home and share at home in addition to the quality text.

**Please remember that you shouldn't expect your child to read these other books by themselves.** Please read it to or with them. Discuss the pictures, enjoy the story, predict what might happen next, use different voices for the characters, discuss the words to extend their vocabulary, explore the facts in a non-fiction book. The main thing is that you have fun!

Once children are confidently working towards the end of Phase 5 of our phonic programme, they will have become more confident and accurate readers with a good understanding of our complex phonetic code and how to manipulate it. They are then now ready to move onto the next step of their reading journey and become **Rainbow Readers**.



## Step 2- Rainbow Readers



Once children are able to apply their increased phonic knowledge confidently and are decoding words automatically, the focus moves to both developing the pace and fluency with which children read and their understanding of what they are reading.

**Rainbow Readers**, with longer and more story-based texts, including non-fiction and poetry, is the next step on children's reading journey at St Peter's. When children are **Rainbow Readers** they will be able to read a range of engaging texts that are appropriate for their level. As they move through the **Rainbow Readers** stage, children are exposed to texts which include longer polysyllabic words and help them to build up an increased sight vocabulary of common exception words. We use the National Book Banding scheme to ensure that children are reading at just the right level of challenge. Each Book Band level has its own colour which is why the program is called **Rainbow Readers**. Children start their Rainbow Reader journey on Orange Level and progress through the following colour bands as they are ready:

- ☐ Orange
- ☐ Turquoise
- ☐ Purple
- ☐ Gold
- ☐ White
- ☐ Lime

The books in each colour band are a careful selection from various reading schemes including new and existing titles from: Bug Club, Oxford Reading Tree, Treetops story books, PM Readers and others. Rainbow Readers will typically receive one or two books (depending on their length) from their current colour level per week to read at home along with a **quality sharing text**.

### Reading practice at home:

We recommend that you read with your child as often as possible, at least 4 times a week, for 10-15 mins. It is best to choose a time when you are both relaxed and not too tired. Find a comfy quiet place for your child to read to you and:

- ☐ Make sure they hold the book and turn the pages themselves.
- ☐ With a new book, flick through the pages looking at the pictures and predict with your child what the story may be about.
- ☐ Point out interesting or new words in the book and explain what they mean. Support them in deciphering new words, or tell them what they are—you are helping to expand their vocabulary.
- ☐ In your discussion, use some of the key vocabulary you may have spotted in the text. You are empowering them, making them ready to tackle this book.

After reading, use some of the questions below to help your child increase their understanding of what they have read, such as:

- ☐ What is the story about?
- ☐ Why did that happen?
- ☐ What do you think will happen next?
- ☐ What is that character feeling?
- ☐ Can you think of anything you have done that is the same as the events/characters in the book?
- ☐ Ask your child their opinion on what they are reading. Are they enjoying it? Why, or why aren't they?

### Some handy hints:

- ☐ You don't have to read all of the book in one go.
- ☐ If children are a bit reluctant, why not try taking turns. They can read a page and then you can read a page.
- ☐ You read the book making deliberate mistakes encouraging your child to help you!
- ☐ Draw up a reading incentive chart for home.

Once children are reading confidently within Lime Level they are ready for the final stage of their reading journey at St. Peter's - the **Reading Challenge**.



## Step 3 - The St. Peter's Reading Challenge

The **Reading Challenge** is our reading scheme for children who can read confidently and accurately at National Book Band Lime Level and are now ready to broaden the range of texts that they encounter. The Reading Challenge has been established for many years but following feedback from pupils, parents, reading helpers and staff the Reading Challenge Diaries have an updat-ed look, and structure. KS2 children contributed their ideas for the Reading Challenge re-design, and we are all thrilled with the result.

### How the Reading Challenge works:

All of the longer 'chapter' reading books from our library have been separated into six levels which become increasingly challenging in vocabulary, length and subject matter. Within each level, children must read a variety of books including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, playscripts, myths and legends. The books in each level were selected to provide an appropriate level of challenge to meet the KS2 Curriculum expectations across different year groups. Each term, children are provided with a levelled Reading Challenge Diary to go alongside their books.

The levels of the Reading Challenge are:

- ☐ Emerald
- ☐ Bronze
- ☐ Silver
- ☐ Gold
- ☐ Diamond
- ☐ Platinum (a more recent addition to extend our Year 6 readers)



Children will move up to the next level once their teacher has assessed them and is satisfied that the child is secure at their current level. This may mean that they complete several Reading Challenge Diaries at each level before moving on - with hundreds of books to choose from though, they will never need to read the same book twice.

A new Reading Challenge begins at the start of each term. In order to 'complete' the challenge, children have to read a set number of books, within their level, before the end of term. At the end of each term, children who have read their target number of books, and completed their diaries, will enjoy the Reading Challenge Reward. This consists of a special celebration assembly and reward session (either a morning or an afternoon). Awards are also presented to the children who have most impressed their teacher with their effort in reading, as well as the class with the highest proportion of children completing the Challenge.

### Completing the Reading Challenge:

1. Your child chooses a book (from their given level) and records its name on the correct section of their diary. They may read the books in any order that they wish (e.g. book 6 and then book 2).
2. Your child must read their book for at least twenty minutes, three times each week. It is important that they read independently as well as to an adult (suggested to be for five to ten minutes each week). They should continue this until they have completed their chosen text.
3. Independently, your child will complete the comprehension-based activity that matches with the book that they have read.
4. You, or another adult from home will need to ask your child the 'Challenge questions' that match with the book they're reading. These questions match with the Reading National Curriculum for your child's level.
5. Finally, your child's teacher will sign off the book and they are then ready to move onto their next book.

The Reading Challenge is your child's main reading homework for the term. This plays a crucial part in your child becoming a more independent reader, and allows them some autonomy on their own reading journey. In addition to this, the Reading Challenge offers children the opportunity to develop their comprehension skills, discuss their chosen books and track their own progress in this area.

If children are not completing their Reading homework, by reading at least three times a week and filling in their Reading Challenge diaries, then reading support at break/lunchtimes will be given.



## Reading Expectations

Stage	Reading in School	Reading at Home	Expectations
<b>Phonic Texts</b>	Children have daily phonic lessons and additional sessions as required.  Children read with an adult on several occasions, helping them to apply their phonic skills to the texts.	Each week children will be given: <input type="checkbox"/> 1x Phonic Reader (the same book that has been used for reading practice in school) 1x Quality Sharing Text <input type="checkbox"/> 1 x Library book from class book club	Children should read their Phonic Text to an adult at least 3 times a week.  An adult should read the Quality Text/ Sharing book to the child at least twice.
<b>Rainbow Readers</b>	Children have daily phonic sessions focusing on more complex sounds.  Children read with an adult, with a mix of small group and individual reading.	Each week children will be given: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 or 2 Rainbow Reader Books (depending on book length) 1x Quality Sharing Text <input type="checkbox"/>	Children should read their Rainbow Reader book to an adult at least 3 /4 times a week.  An adult should read the Quality Text/ Sharing book to the child at least twice.
<b>Reading Challenge</b>	Children have opportunities for independent reading during Soft Start and some afternoons.  Children have opportunities to read to an adult.	Over the half-term, children will at least: <input type="checkbox"/> Read between 6 and 9 texts. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete 6 to 9 activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Answer 6 to 9 sets of comprehension questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Complete one Reading Challenge diary.	Children should read their Reading Challenge book to an adult for 5 to 10 minutes each week.  Children should read independently for 1 hour a week (3x 20 minutes).

## Keeping up in Reading

Sometimes, children find acquiring the skills needed in reading a little more challenging. Our strategy for these children aims to support them in 'keeping up' and then, where needed, to 'catch up'. We utilise our staff for additional 1:1 or group reading sessions and have a range of supplemental programmes which help to develop children's reading abilities.

## Group & Whole-Class Guided Reading

### Group Reading

The skill of reading is more than just decoding the words on the page, children need to learn how to read with fluency, confidence and understanding. Children in the EYFS & KS1 work with an adult as small groups, pairs or individuals to develop these skills. Children use books from their current reading level (either matched Phonic Texts or Rainbow Colour level) and as they read together, the adult both models new skills and supports the children in showing what they can do through supportive questioning.

### Whole-Class Guided Reading

In KS2, we take a whole-class approach to teaching Reading. Over the course of each academic year, children will discover and explore at least three shared texts. These are high-quality, age-appropriate fiction texts that are accessible for the entire class—with each child sharing a copy with their partner. Each text will be taught daily (20 minute sessions) for a term (10-12 weeks).

Through these texts, teachers will cover a range of comprehension skills and question types. In any given week, children will read aloud and independently, take part in discussions and answer a range of questions. We follow the Read and Respond scheme of work to inform our teaching of these Guided Reading lessons. Separately, often as part of English lessons, children are also exposed to a wider range of genres and text types, such as: non-fiction, poetry, myths and legends, playscripts and graphic novels.

## Developing a love of reading across the curriculum:

### Storytime & Class Readers:

Reading aloud is an important shared experience and gives children access to a wider range of texts. Hearing a text read aloud often draws out elements for children that go unnoticed when they read 'inside their heads' or to an adult. Reading to the whole class allows teachers to select books which broaden children's reading experiences and exposes them to a wider range of language and vocabulary in a supportive context.

Every class in the school has a 'Story Time' session every day for around 15-20 minutes where an adult reads aloud to the children.

- Each year group in EYFS & KS1 has a '**Favourite Five**', '**Superb Six**' or '**Spectacular Seven**'. These are books which have been selected by staff to engage children, stir ideas and feelings and excite the reader's interest and imagination. They are books that children will want to re-read, to savour and will remember. These stories are read, enjoyed and re-visited during daily story time each half term so that children become familiar with their structure and vocabulary.
- In KS2, each teacher chooses a '**Class Reader**' which lasts roughly a half-term, depending on the length of book. This is an age-appropriate book which is either chosen solely by the class teacher, or collectively with the class. These texts are chosen for a range of reasons, including: links to the class' topic, being a teacher favourite, a classic, another book by an author already enjoyed or sometimes even a new highly-commended publication.

### Our Library & Classroom Book Corners

Through our school library, classroom book corners, and book trolleys, every child at St. Peter's has access to a wide variety of texts. Our library is central to our school and has hundreds of texts just waiting to be discovered. It is a place where teachers: share stories with their classes, KS1 choose picture books, KS2 children find new books for their Reading Challenge, children borrow books to read for pleasure, and new exciting texts are displayed. There is plenty of comfy seating, cuddly friends and cosy blankets—it is a place where children can become immersed in their reading.

The library is split into sections appropriate for KS1 and KS2, as well as non-fiction. New books are often added to our ever-evolving collection, some of which have been very kindly donated by parents and past-pupils and we regularly audit our Library stock to ensure that the books available for children to select are of a high quality. Our most recent additions have included beautifully illustrated non-fiction and newly published books for our KS2 readers!

Every classroom also has a dedicated book corner/area where carefully selected texts are provided. Children in EYFS and KS1 enjoy visiting the library to choose books for their class book corner. Class book corners also include books chosen by staff which change over the course of the year to match the children's interests and current learning. KS2 are fortunate enough to also have Book Trolleys by their classrooms, so that the children never get caught out without a book!

Each class also takes part in 'Class Book Club' once a week, this is an opportunity for the children to visit the library to discuss their favourite books at the time to recommend books to others, find series of books by same authors and promote other teachers' suggestions. Children really look forward to Class Book Club and it is a highlight of the week!

### Birthday Books:

We believe in the power of reading communities and the impact that reading has on children's overall achievement. Book ownership has been directly linked with improved mental health amongst children and a greater desire to read for pleasure. One in four disadvantaged children across the UK has fewer than ten books of their own at home\*, and one in eight has none. However, disadvantage is by no means the only reason for a lack of books in many homes. Lack of time, negative experiences as a child or lack of confidence about their own reading skills or book choices can all affect a family's inclination to own books.

We want every child to feel part of their reading community and to identify with books that they have enjoyed. On

their birthday each year, every child receives the gift of a quality picture or story book jointly funded by the school and the Friends of St Peter's to keep at home forever. Launched during Storytelling Week 2022, our Birthday Books are well loved, classic titles chosen by our staff which we hope children will treasure for years to come.

(\*Book ownership, literacy engagement and mental wellbeing © National Literacy Trust 2018)